124 The problem is aggravated by the fact that the Mossi possess no religious theories and are not in the habit of discussing their beliefs. They are bewildered by the slightest "Why," the most elementary "how is it so." To fulfill the needs of our European minds, therefore, it proved necessary to put a little order and clarity into the ideas we gleaned here and there. In this area especially we have avoided as much as possible any tendency to systematize, and we can say that there is nothing of our own in the two chapters that follow. We have listened to the natives, elicited explanations, asked questions, and made note of the answers. We shall now transcribe the results. Of course the answers did not always agree, and we /78/ were forced to make choices on the basis of those testimonies which appeared most worthy of trust. The disagreements were on matters of detail only, and on the whole the statements persistently agreed on the most important points. In any case, whenever a serious doubt arises, we shall be careful to point it out.

776 576 How could Lt. Marc ever write, "We do not believe that the Mossi have the concept of a single God and Creator"? (1) The idea of God

1. Marc, Au pays des Mossi /In Mossi Country/, p. 158.

is everywhere to be found among this people. The merest wish, the simplest greeting, includes the name of God. When someone is going away, the person who is leaving and those who are staying hold the following exchange: "May God be with me," says the one who goes; "May God see you home! May God cause you to return! May God move your legs!" answer those who remain.

Persons who receive gifts tell their benefactor: "May God keep you! May God cause you to remain a long time (on this earth)! May God reward you! May God repay you!"

If a friend is seen wearing a new garment, this occasions another greeting: "May God allow you to wear it out before you discard it!"

If he is eating, he is told: "May God cause you to profit by it!"

If he comes to announce the birth of an heir: "God grant that you may suspend him from your shoulder!" /Tr., Mossi children from age two or thereabouts are often carried astraddle the hip and holding on to the shoulder./ [854]

If he is leaving to return on the same day: "May God grant us the pleasure of talking to each other!"

844 the child is washed in warm water and then placed on a mat in a sort of nest made with old skirt cloths and various bits of fabric. Then the woman is placed on the mat next to the child which can now be suckled. Let us note, however, one final ceremony. Before the
844 woman gives the breast, the child is washed in dolo, especially the
853 inside /253/ of the nose and the genitalia, for the Mossi, like the
826 Bambara, are convinced that mother's milk has an injurious effect on these two parts of a child's anatomy. If the child, while suckling, should breathe in some milk through its nose, this would, it is said, cause the interior of the organ to rot. Likewise, were a few drops to fall on its genitalia, that part would suffer from it. The dolo prevents such lamentable accidents.

846 At the end of three days, the woman leaves the compound and goes to pay a call on the old women who helped her and to thank them. After two weeks or a month, she takes up her usual tasks.

● 854 The Mossi and Foulsé women of Yatenga carry their children on the back after the fashion of other Sudanese women, holding them in a skirt cloth which they tie and knot up in front over the breasts.

851 Baptism. —No celebration takes place at birth. The child is bap-
553 tized about a month later. One of the older members of the family, other than the mother and father, chooses the name. In selecting it, the sponsor takes some event into account, whether important or unimportant, which occurred during the mother's pregnancy. If she was frightened by a horse, the child is named Oueyfo. If, by accident, she crushed a chicken to death, the newborn is called Noga. If a sacrifice was made for the expected child on a hill, he is named Tenga; if the sacrifice was made to a bastard mahogany tree, the child is called Kouka, etc.

551 Let us note that most Mossi proper names, male or female, are the names of vegetables, trees, animals, etc., that is, precisely those names with which an attempt was made to replace the traditional proper names in France in 1793.

Curiously enough, there are no family names. When one wants to pinpoint someone's individuality, one says, "So-and-So (here, the proper name), son of So-and-So (here, the father's proper name)." If there are two men with the same name in one compound, an agnomen will be used to distinguish them, for example, "Tenga the Big and Tenga the Small." As for the Mossi sondogo (pl., sondéré), which is the same as the Bambara diamou, this is a clan name (we shall return

845 The birth of twins is a good omen when they are of different sex.
787 If they are of the same sex, however, it is a sign of approaching death for the father if they are girls, or for the mother if they are of the male sex. To conjure away this fate, a chicken is sacrificed.

853 Nursing. —When a woman is unable to nurse her child, another woman of the family is called in as a wet nurse, or, more simply, a goat is made to suckle the child. Both cases, however, are quite unusual.

854 Charms for children and tattooing. To protect the child from ill-
751 ness or accidents, a necklace with a charm containing the ashes of various shrubs is placed around its neck about two months after birth.

304 The child is tattooed two and a half or three years after birth. Old women are in charge of this operation. They trace out the lines for the scars on the child's face with a sharp little knife which is bent at the tip. Then they put a mixture of karite butter and powdered charcoal on the wounds to stop the flow of blood.

Tattooing is the same for all the Mossi of Yatenga without distinction of rank. It consists of three vertical scars on each cheek, an oblique one on either side of the face from the corner between the eye and nose to the base of the cheek, and two or three little ones in the middle of the forehead. /255/

854 The very young child. —As in all of the /French/ Sudan, the mother carries the child on her back, wrapped in a cloth that is knotted in front over or under the breasts. She goes thus everywhere, works, pounds millet, etc., with the child on her back.

853 When she wants to suckle it, she brings it to her side, astraddle one hip, and supports it with one arm. She does not put it on the ground unless she is in her hut or teaching it how to walk.

When the child is two or three, it stops nursing and is put on the ground.

857 Until they are four or five, the children run about the compound and around it. At that age, they begin to go out into the bush all by themselves and to play with the other little boys.

Children's games. —We shall deal with this subject under "Mode of Subsistence (hygiene, games, play)."

857 Familial education. —The boys, as soon as they reach the age of
868 five or six, go with their big brother and tend the goats in the bush. They also go and fetch firewood, straw, etc. When they are nine or ten, they begin to handle the daba /a field implement/. At eleven or twelve they are already doing men's work.

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
FA28 Mossi FA28

765 and districts were present to honor him. This being completed, the
602 *griots* are paid, everyone rises and shouts *Ne Wardo* (the salutation at
443 funerals), and that part of the funeral ceremony during which a man
[837] takes leave of the market community is concluded. Now his relatives, descendants and friends all return to the market, whose sights and sounds make it an integral part of the life cycle of the Mossi—the one institution of their society in which almost everyone participates actively.

443 Preparation for a market day, especially the tri-weekly Friday
512 market or *Raga kasanga*, usually begins on Thursday. This day is
571 characterized by a great deal of activity: preparing the commodities which are to be sold the next day, washing body and clothes, and combing hair. The women who prepare the beer and fried foods work late into the night preparing their wares, and a visit to the homes of the
[857] *griots* finds them preparing their drums. The little boys who go to the roadside to chant Moslem prayers to the passers-by, and the little girls who sell water to these strangers redouble their efforts until late on Thursday night to get enough money to buy presents in the market the next day. Finally, when it is quite late and the beer-making fires are out, everyone retires until the morning of the market.

At 7:00 A.M. on Friday the market is deserted except for a leper who sweeps out the stalls of the sellers in return for bits of food or presents of money. Looking at the empty stalls, one has a certain amount of difficulty imagining that this spot will be crowded with human beings five hours hence. But one is also conscious of the fact that even at this early hour scores of persons have already left their homes in distant villages and are on their way to market loaded with prod-
[402] uce and with high hopes for the day. About 9:00 A.M. the first women arrive, balancing net-covered bundles on their heads, and take their positions in the various sections of the market with either face or back pointing to the direction from which they came. By 9:30 A.M. the butchers have arrived with their bleating sheep and goats and an
[273] aged cow. The first beer sellers have also arrived and are giving "sips" to men before they settle down to sustained drinking.

The pace of the market quickens about 10:30, and in the distance the first tap of the Bindere's drum resounds. All of a sudden, the market seems to have become a giant magnet, drawing long lines of
[254] people towards it along every path and from every direction. Women dressed in brightly colored print cloths and dresses, with babies straddling their backs and the inevitable bundles on their head, saunter into their places. Young children run ahead of their mothers or stumble behind them. Those vendors of European products who customarily transport their goods in boxes on bicycles arrive in the